

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany – Officials representing U.S. Forces and the German State of Bavaria have signed an agreement to form a joint environmental working group.

The agreement was signed here Thursday by Installation Management Agency Europe Regional Director Russell B. Hall and Bavarian environmental protection minister Dr. Werner Schnappauf.

Schnappauf said the working group will address environmental issues such as water protection, waste and sewage disposal, soil protection, remediation of contaminated sites, emissions and the protection of nature and the landscape. The environmental chief thanked the U.S. Forces for their willingness to cooperate with joint nature protection.

Hall noted that increased environmental action and awareness parallels the pace of the changing force structure in Europe, the necessity for environmental stewardship at training bases such as Grafenwoehr and a renewed commitment to our European allies.

Both representatives described the formation of the working group as “a natural progression,” saying that environmental issues had previously been handled at the “local level,” and needed to be elevated to the state level. They also spoke of the increased pace of environmental legislation, much of which is originating from the European Union.

“These (extremely positive) changes,” noted the IMA-EURO chief, “make direct and continuing contact with the state government absolutely imperative.”

(Compiled from U.S. and German media reports)